NEWS

Conference tackling world's greatest climate challenges

Author: Grahame Madge
09:15 (UTC+1) on Tue 11 May 2021

An online Met Office climate science conference is set to address two of the biggest challenges facing society: net zero and climate resilience.

The two-day virtual conference, which begins today [Tuesday 11 May, 2021], will be uniting leading scientists and policy makers with climate science communicators and donor organisations. The conference aims to establish a vision for how climate science and services can create a more sustainable and resilient future, supporting the ambitions of diverse societies across the world.

Professor Peter Stott of the Met Office is the conference organiser. He said: "With six months to go until COP26 – the international climate summit in Glasgow - our virtual conference is perfectly timed to layout a scientific agenda to inform climate policy during the event in Scotland and until the end of the decade.

"The theme of the conference is all about how we develop science for the resilient future we all want to have, as we tackle climate and move to a net zero world.

"The Met Office Hadley Centre – one of the world's largest climate research organisations – was founded just over 30 years ago. When you consider that the world hopes to achieve net zero within the next 30 years, we are midway along our climate science journey. With the UK on a huge international stage at the end of the year, this is a vital year for helping to address the climate crisis."

The conference will be tackling aspects of the following key themes:

- Current and future risks from weather and climate;
- High-impact, low-likelihood outcomes of climate change, including the loss of the Antarctic ice sheets;
- Getting to net zero Future carbon and mitigation strategies to get to net zero and to avoid the most dangerous impacts of climate change;
- Climate resilient development: minimising impacts and trade-offs, and maximising the co-benefits of mitigation and adaptation measures, such as those tackling air pollution, health and biodiversity loss;

There will also be a special focus on Pan-African perspectives within the context of the four main conference themes, looking at the past, the present and the future over the next decade or so.

The conference will see contributions from Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP - the president of COP26, and Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser.

Alok Sharma said: "It is vital that science is at the heart of international efforts to tackle climate change, and that we are guided by the evidence."

As well as hearing keynote speeches and taking part in panel discussions, delegates will also have the opportunity to think about how climate science is communicated through a number of workshops.

Professor Stott concluded: "With 1350 people from 66 countries registered for the conference, this event provides a platform for concerned individuals from around the world to think about the role of science in tackling the challenges of a changing climate."

© Crown Copyright